of revenue, derived from providing telecommunications services, between different services providers;

(e) recommend revocation of licence for non-compliance of terms and conditions of licence;

(f) ensure compliance of terms and conditions of licence;

(g) protect the interest of customers of telecommunication services;

(h) settle disputes between service providers;

(i) fix rates for providing telecommunication within an outside India; and

(j) monitor the quality of service and conduct periodical surveys of such service provided by service providers.

3. While the role and powers conferred on the TRAI envisage a substantial measure of autonomy to the Authority, the functions relating to grant/revocation of licences and fixing terms and conditions of licences still vest with the Central Government. As per Section 25(2) of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997, the TRAI shall, in exercise of its powers and performance of its functions, be bound by such directions on questions of policy as the Central Government may give in writing to it from time to time.

4. The TRAI has been set up mainly with a view to perform regulatory functions and, thereby, provide a level playing field in the Telecom Sector.

As a service provider, the Department Telecommunications (DoT) would come within the scope of TRAI's functions but its responsibilities, including in the field of policy, are not affected.

Printing of Telephone Directories

4124. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the latest telephone directories Circle/District-wise printed and distributed to subscribers and upto what date were they corrected and available for collection by subscribers; and

(b) by when the next Directory expected to be published, Circle/District-wise; and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House as soon as possible.

Violation of Tender for Procuring Digital Exchanges from MNCs

4125. SHRI G. PRATHAPA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that DoT procured 8.9 lakh lines of digital exchanges from MNCs against the tendered quantity of 2 lakh lines only; if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) the special features of ISDN facility in MNC switching technology and the cost;

(c) the number of subscribers as ondate who are using the ISDN service and the revenue being generated from these subscribers; and

(d) the number of subscribers using ISDN services in the developed countries?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Yes, Sir. The Department procured 9.1 lakh lines of Digital Exchanges from the Companies registered to manufacture such equipment

in India. Extra procurement of Digital Switching Equipment was necessitated by the urgent need to expand and modernise DoT's Telecom Network.

(b) Some of the important features of ISDN facility provided in this technology are:

(i) Two 64 Kbps Digital Channels and a 16 Kbps digital signaling channel for Basis Rate Access.

(ii) Supplementary services like Calling Line Identification, Call Waiting, Terminal Portability and Multiple Subscriber Number.

2. The cost of ISDN facility is included in the cost of Digital Switching Equipment.

(c) The number of subscribers using ISDN are 309. The revenue generated so far is about Rs. 50 lakhs.

(d) The number of subscribers using ISDN services in some of the developed countries in 1995, is as follows:—

(i) U.S.A.	—	507310
(ii) Japan	—	343640
(iii) Germany	—	961610
(iv) France	—	171000
(v) U.K.	—	260000
(vi) Italy	—	49060

Tnder For Jelly Filled Telephone Cables

4126. SHRI SOM PAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Department of Telecommunications had floated tender for jelly filled telephone cables;

(b) if so, the details inrespect of: (i) quantity and value, (ii) list of bidders and prices quoted, (iii) actual orders placed on each bidder in terms of quantity and percentage of the total order;

(c) the recommendations of the Tender Evaluation Committee regarding quantity to be ordered to each bidder; and

(d) the names of the firms that have been given orders either more or less than the quantities recommended by the Tender Evaluation Committee and extent of variation?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Yes, sir. Tender was issued on 29-1-1997 and opened on 25-3-1997.

(b) (i) The tender is for procurement of 359 lakh conductor kilometers of Polythene insulated Jelly filled cables at an estimated cost of Rs. 3381.00 crore.

(ii) As per Annexure. [*See* Appendix 180. Annexure No. 86]

(iii) The tender is presently under evaluation.

(c) The tender is presently under evaluation.

(d) Does not arise in view of answer (c) above.

Licence Agreement by LOI Holders

4127. SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the status of the LOIs issued for providing basic telephone services;

(b) the number of selected bidders who have signed the Licence Agreement and paid the first instalment of licence fee; and

(c) the action proposed in respect of LOI holders who are yet to sign the licence agreement?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) 12 Letters of Intent (LOIs) have so far been issued to 8 companies for provision of Basic Telephone Service in 12 Telecom Circles. Out of these, cases of 7 LOIs issued to 4 companies are sub-judice in the High Court of Delhi. 2 LOIs have been converted into Licences. In respect of remaining 3 LOIs, the concerned